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DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION: FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Report of the Second Committee (Part IV)*

Rapporteur: Mr. Walter BALZAN (Malta)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on item 78 (see A/47/718, para. 2). Action to be taken on sub-item (b) was considered at the 47th and 49th meetings, on 30 November and 9 December 1992. An account of the Committee's consideration of the item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/47/SR.47 and 49).

II. CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS

A. Draft resolutions A/C.2/47/L.57 and L.77

2. At the 47th meeting, on 30 November, the representative of Pakistan, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are also members of the Group of 77, introduced a draft resolution (A/C.2/47/L.57) entitled "Food and agricultural development", which read as follows:

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* The report of the Committee on this item will be issued in seven parts (see also A/47/718 and Add.1, 2 and 4-6).

"The General Assembly,

"Reaffirming the importance and continued validity of the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries, contained in the annex to its resolution S-18/3 of 1 May 1990, the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, contained in the annex to its resolution 45/199 of 21 December 1990, the Cartagena Commitment, 1/ the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, contained in its annex to its resolution 46/151 of 18 December 1991, the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, 2/ and the various consensus agreements and conventions, especially Agenda 21, 3/ which were adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,

"Reaffirming also its resolution 45/207 of 21 December 1990 on food and agricultural problems and Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/32 of 30 July 1992,

"Reaffirming further that the right to food is a universal human right that should be guaranteed to all people,

"Deeply concerned that hunger and malnutrition have been increasing in many areas, particularly in Africa, since the World Food Conference was held in 1974,

"Gravely alarmed that the volume of world food and agricultural production fell in 1991, the first global decline since 1983, and that food stocks declined rapidly,

"Noting with concern the negative impact of the stalemate of the Uruguay Round and of current trends of international trade in agricultural products, owing notably to the increasing persistence of trade-distorting agricultural support, on the development of a viable agricultural sector and in improving food security in developing countries,

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1/ See TD/364, part one, sect. A.

2/ See Report of the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Paris, 3-14 September 1990 (A/CONF.147/18), part one.

3/ See Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, (A/CONF.151/26), vols. I, II and Corr.1, and III.

"1. Welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on trends in the international market for agricultural and tropical products, developments in the liberalization of international trade in agricultural and tropical products, and follow-up to the section on agriculture of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, 4/ as well as the conclusions and recommendations of the World Food Council at its eighteenth session; 5/

"2. Affirms that increasing food production and improving access to food by low-income people in developing countries will significantly contribute to the alleviation of poverty and the elimination of malnutrition and to helping raise their standard of living;

"3. Calls upon the international community to consider food and agricultural issues in a comprehensive and multidimensional manner;

"4. Encourages the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the World Food Council, the World Food Programme and other relevant organs of the United Nations system, as well as regional and subregional financial institutions, to improve their cooperation and coordination in the field of food and agricultural development;

"5. Urges developed countries to strengthen their efforts to work towards a more equitable international environment, in particular to a fair, open and viable international agricultural trading system that will stimulate food production and productivity in developing countries, and in this connection stresses the urgent need for a balanced and successful outcome of the Uruguay Round, which will take into account ways to alleviate the possible negative effect on net food-importing developing countries;

"6. Stresses the urgent need for substantial progress in stimulating food and agricultural production and productivity, in order to create a basis for more rapid industrialization and diversification of their economic structure, in particular the agro-industrial sector, thus contributing to their efforts towards sustained economic growth and development;

"7. Calls upon the international community to support scientific and technological research and training as well as capacity-building in developing countries in order to promote sustainable agricultural development;

4/ A/47/395.

5/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 19 (A/47/19), part one.

"8. Emphasizes the urgency of strengthening international cooperation in the field of transfer of environmentally sound agricultural technology;

"9. Requests the United Nations development system to continue its support in providing technical cooperation for agricultural and rural development;

"10. Requests developed countries and the United Nations development system to assist and support technical cooperation among developing countries in the area of food and agricultural development;

"11. Stresses the importance of finance for investment in the agricultural sector and urges the international community to take further determined action in support of the efforts of developing countries in this regard;

"12. Requests the Secretary General, in consultation with relevant organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, to submit to it at its forty-ninth session a report on food production, including agro-industrial products, international markets for agricultural and tropical products and the state of global food security, taking into particular account the needs of all developing countries, including net food-importing countries;

"13. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-ninth session an item entitled 'Food and agricultural development'."

3. At its 49th meeting, on 9 December, the Committee had before it a draft resolution (A/C.2/47/L.77), submitted by the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Miss Maymouna Diop (Senegal), on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.57.

4. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.77 without a vote (see para.10, draft resolution I).

5. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.77, draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.57 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

B. Draft resolutions A/C.2/47/L.59 and L.76

6. At the 47th meeting, on 30 November, the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, also on behalf of Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden, introduced a draft resolution (A/C.2/47/L.59) entitled "Strengthening the United Nations response to world food and hunger problems", which read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Concerned about the world food situation, particularly in Africa, where drought and other factors have worsened the problems of hunger and malnutrition,

"Stressing the urgent need for a more effective and well-coordinated United Nations response to world food and hunger problems,

"Recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/32 of 30 July 1992, and the decisions of the World Food Council at its eighteenth session, 6/

"Regretting that the World Food Council, which was established to provide such a response, has, by its own admission, fallen short of achieving the political leadership and coordination role expected by its founders,

"Taking note of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the World Food Council, 7/

"1. Affirms the critical importance of establishing the most effective arrangements for the management and coordination of food issues in the United Nations system;

"2. Underlines the need to consider how the mandate and functions of the World Food Council might best be carried out in the wider context of the overall restructuring of the social and economic activities of the United Nations system;

"3. Invites the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the World Food Council to continue its attempts to reach a consensus on appropriate measures to be taken, and to communicate any agreed conclusions to the General Assembly;

"4. Decides to address these issues in the context of the discussions on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields at the resumed forty-seventh session of the General Assembly envisaged in resolution 45/264, taking into account any consensus reached within the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the World Food Council."

6/ Ibid.

7/ A/47/19/Add.1.

7. At its 49th meeting, on 9 December, the Committee had before it draft resolution (A/C.2/47/L.76), submitted by the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Miss Maymouna Diop (Senegal), on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.59.

8. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.76 without a vote (see para. 10, draft resolution II).

9. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.76, draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.59 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE

10. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

DRAFT RESOLUTION I

Food and agricultural development

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the importance and continued validity of the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries, contained in the annex to its resolution S-18/3 of 1 May 1990, the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, contained in the annex to its resolution 45/199 of 21 December 1990, the Cartagena Commitment, 8/ the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, contained in its annex to its resolution 46/151 of 18 December 1991, the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, 9/ and the various consensus agreements and conventions, especially Agenda 21, 10/ which were adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,

Reaffirming also its resolution 45/207 of 21 December 1990 on food and agricultural problems and Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/32 of 30 July 1992,

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8/ See TD/364, part one, sect. A.

9/ See Report of the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Paris, 3-14 September 1990 (A/CONF.147/18), part one.

10/ See Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992 (A/CONF.151/26), vols. I, II and Corr.1, and III.

Reaffirming further that the right to food is a universal human right that should be guaranteed to all people,

Deeply concerned that hunger and malnutrition have been increasing in many areas, particularly in Africa,

Expressing deep concern that the volume of world food and agricultural production fell in 1991, the first global decline since 1983, and that food stocks declined rapidly,

Recognizing the importance of stimulating food production and productivity in developing countries through appropriate policies, taking fully into account Agenda 21, and through a suitable economic environment, including a more open international trading system, for the development of a viable agricultural sector and improved food security, and in this context noting with concern that the negotiations regarding the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations have not yet been completed and expressing the hope that they will reach a rapid, balanced and comprehensive conclusion,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on trends in the international market for agricultural and tropical products, developments in the liberalization of international trade in agricultural and tropical products, and follow-up to the section on agriculture of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, 11/ as well as the conclusions and recommendations of the World Food Council at its eighteenth session; 12/

2. Affirms that increasing food production and improving access to food by low-income people in developing countries will significantly contribute to the alleviation of poverty and the elimination of malnutrition and to helping to raise their standard of living;

3. Stresses the importance of stimulating food and agricultural production and productivity in developing countries in order to achieve sustainable economic growth and development and on this basis create the conditions for more rapid industrialization and diversification of their economic activities, in particular in the agro-industrial sector;

4. Calls upon the international community to consider food and agricultural issues in a comprehensive and multidimensional manner;

5. Encourages all relevant organs of the United Nations system dealing with food and agriculture, as well as regional and subregional financial institutions, to improve their cooperation and coordination in the field of food and agricultural development;

11/ A/47/395.

12/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 19 (A/47/19), part one.

6. Urges all countries, in particular developed countries, to strengthen their efforts to work towards a more equitable international environment, in particular a fairer, more open and viable international agricultural trading system that will stimulate food production and productivity in developing countries, and in this connection stresses the urgent need for a balanced and successful outcome of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, as well as the need to give effect to the mid-term review agreements, in which it was stated that ways should be developed to take into account the possible negative effects of the reform process on net food-importing developing countries;

7. Calls upon the international community to support scientific and technological research and training as well as capacity-building in developing countries in order to promote sustainable agricultural development;

8. Emphasizes the urgency of strengthening international cooperation in the transfer of environmentally sound agricultural technology;

9. Requests the United Nations development system to continue its support in providing technical cooperation for agricultural and rural development;

10. Requests the international community to continue to assist and support technical cooperation, including technical cooperation among developing countries in the area of food and agricultural development;

11. Stresses the importance of finance for investment in the agricultural sector, and urges the international community to take further determined action in support of the efforts of developing countries in this regard;

12. Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with relevant organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, to submit to it at its forty-ninth session a report on food production, including agro-industrial products, international markets for agricultural and tropical products, and the state of global food security, taking into particular account the needs of all developing countries, including net food-importing countries;

13. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-ninth session an item entitled "Food and agricultural development".

DRAFT RESOLUTION II

Strengthening the United Nations response to world food and hunger problems

The General Assembly,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/32 of 30 July 1992, and the decisions of the World Food Council at its eighteenth session, 12/

Taking note of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the World Food Council, 13/

Deeply concerned about the gravity of the world food security situation, in particular the worsening problems of hunger and malnutrition,

Stressing the urgent need for a more effective and well-coordinated United Nations response to world food and hunger problems,

Underscoring the increasing importance of intergovernmental policy guidance in this field,

Noting with concern that, despite its efforts, the World Food Council, by its own acknowledgement, has not been able to achieve political leadership and coordination to the extent expected by its founders,

1. Affirms the critical importance of establishing the most effective arrangements for the management and coordination of the United Nations response to world food and hunger problems;

2. Underlines the need to consider the role of the World Food Council, and how its mandate and functions might best be carried out within the wider context of the overall restructuring of the social and economic activities of the United Nations system;

3. Decides to address these issues in the context of the discussions on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields at the resumed forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, and in this context, invites the World Food Council to continue its attempts to agree on appropriate measures to be taken and to communicate any agreed conclusions to the General Assembly.

13/ A/47/19/Add.1.